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## **Newsletter - 1971-01-28**

E. De la Garza

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FOR RELEASE: 28 January 1971

92-264

FROM: Kika de la Garza

WASHINGTON, D. C.--The first order of business for the first session of a new Congress--and this is a new one, the 92nd--is to organize for the work ahead. This session convened on January 21. Before that, separate caucuses were held by House Democrats and Republicans to select their leaders for the session. One of our fine Texas Congressmen, Olin (Tiger) Teague of Bryan, was elected caucus chairman, which seemed to come as a surprise to some of the political commentators for eastern newspapers. But it was no surprise to those of us who know Representative Teague, one of the most popular and most capable members of the House.

Democrats again being in the majority in both houses of Congress, our selection for the vastly important position of Speaker of the House was automatically elected on the first day of the session.

Until the Speaker is officially elected, the Clerk of the House presides over the beginning of a Congress. He is a continuing officer whose duties do not terminate with the sine die adjournment of the Congress. The duties of the Clerk are largely executive and quasi-judicial in nature. He attests bills, resolutions and subpoenas, is custodian of the seal of the House, and prepares the roll of Representatives-elect.

For this Congress two men from Texas' neighboring states of Oklahoma and Louisiana were named, respectively, as Speaker and Majority Leader of the House. The new Speaker, Carl Albert of Oklahoma, won a top-heavy majority in the caucus of House Democrats. Both he and the new Majority Leader, Hale Boggs of Louisiana, have served in the House since 1947, so they have plenty of experience to guide them in the performance of their leadership duties.

Speaker Albert and Majority Leader Boggs have shown in many instances that they understand and are sympathetic with the problems of South Texas. It is good to know that our area has friends in these powerful positions.

\* \* \* \* \*

COMMITTEES--Appointment of committees, in both branches of Congress, follows closely on the naming of the leaders. The work of preparing and considering legislation is done largely by committees. There are 21 standing committees in the House and 16 in the Senate. In addition, there are special committees in each body as well as various congressional commissions and joint committees. The House and the Senate may also appoint

special investigating committees. All bills and resolutions are referred to the appropriate committees, which may report a bill out in its original form, vote against it in committee, make changes or allow the proposed legislation to die in committee.

The personnel of the standing committees is chosen by a vote of the House and the Senate. Members of other committees are appointed by the presiding officer. I have had the honor of serving on the House Agricultural Committee ever since I came to Congress and I hope I shall continue to do so, since a member can only serve on one major committee or two minor ones. It is an assignment that pleases me greatly, both because I like the work and because I feel it gives me an opportunity to work effectively for the farm producers of our great South Texas district.

It is worth noting that Texas has more important committee chairmanships in the House of Representatives than any other state. They are: W. R. (Bob) Poage of Waco, Chairman of the Agriculture Committee; George H. Mahon of Lubbock, Chairman of the Appropriations Committee; Wright Patman of Texarkana, Chairman of the Banking and Currency Committee, and "Tiger" Teague, Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. Each of them does a great job for Texas and for the whole country.

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NOT SO OLD--Some criticism is leveled at Congress from time to time on the grounds that its members are so advanced in age that they are no longer in tune with the problems of the country. But we're not that old, honest! A current survey shows that the average age in the 92nd Congress is 52.7 years old, which is a fraction below the 53-year-old average two years ago. Senators are a bit older, their average age being 56.4 years. The average age for House members is 51.9 years -- and up to now, I must report, I am somewhat below the average in this respect. I haven't found in my service here that age has much to do with the kind of job a member of Congress does for the people he represents.

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KIKA'S SAYINGS--Speak to people. There is nothing as nice as a cheerful word of greeting to everyone you meet.

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VISITORS--Visitors to my office recently were Mr and Mrs O T Salinas, Mission; Mr Lee Gandy and Mr "Dub" Lauder, Mercedes; Mr Jim Young and Mr George Young, also Mr Leon Bence, Harlingen; and E-5 Spencer Eggleston, USAF, from McAllen.